

Dear friends,

Friday evening was superb because the Exeter University singers provided a concert of sacred music that restored your faith in young adults. They sang magnificently and all deserved a bottle of wine at the end, but I presented one to each of the three conductors and two accompanists. I'm glad I had my ear wax removed earlier in the day so I could hear properly!

Saturday evening was my farewell party at St. Peter's. It was a humbling and special event with contributions from all three churches. The evening had so many people from the churches who I now consider friends, and though I am leaving, we will not be losing touch. I ended the evening by singing "My way" which went much better than I had anticipated because I was so nervous. (Louise posted that on Facebook and I was secretly quite proud) Archdeacon Trevor Jones then said a few lovely words and presented me with a cheque. When we got home and opened the card we were absolutely amazed at how much the cheque was for. We will not squander it, I promise, and we'll use it for a special trip away to somewhere that we'll remember.

Palm Sunday was an emotional time in both village churches and it was lovely to see so many people there. Louise nearly lost it during the prayers at All Saints. After both services there were lovely words and presentations. We were given a lovely depiction of All Saints church and a very funny presentation from John in Otterton who presented us with (amongst more conventional gifts) a can of SPAM. Yes, I was mystified too but it is to remind us of **St. Peter's All Saints** and **St. Michael's**. It'll take pride of place in our food cupboard.

Holy Week: On **Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday** we have compline at 7pm.

Tuesday Morning prayer in All Saints at 9.30 as usual.

Wednesday Communion service at St. Peter's at 9.30 as usual

Maundy Thursday Morning prayer at St. Michael's has changed to accommodate the school's end of term service and will now be held at 10.15 at 38, Fore street, Otterton

Maundy Thursday we have a foot washing Eucharist also at 7pm.

Good Friday we have the Cross of Christ in St. Michael's at noon and the "Good Friday reflections" service at 3pm in St. Peter's.

This is my last "soul food" as a licensed priest in the church of England. There will be an inevitable pause while I consider which way to go, whether it will continue and what form that will take. In any event, it has been a curious pleasure in writing these missives over more years that I can remember and thank you to everyone who has travelled with me during that time, from Romania, County Durham, Tynemouth and now Devon. You all remain special to me.

Contact details: several people have asked me for our contact details after May 8th, which is our moving date, so here goes;

Meadway cottage, 7 Meadway, Sidmouth. EX10 9JA.

My mobile number remains the same 07795 025016 and my email address remains the same. revmartinjacques@gmail.com

Sunday 5th April – Easter Sunday

I will preside at both services at St. Peter's and Archdeacon Trevor Jones will preside at All Saints and St. Michael's at 9.30 and 11am respectively

Acts 10: 34-43. This thumbnail sketch of the life, death and resurrection of Jesus ends with the statement that all who believe in Jesus can be assured that their sins are forgiven. The main theme is the universal scope of Jesus' life and mission (verse 34) even though his roots were in Israel (verse 36)

Colossians 3: 1-4. Whilst we are assured of future glory in the future, Christians have to live in this world now. For believers, our true location is in God or "hidden in Christ". This is not a doctrine of mindless euphoria, because this new status carries with it a new imperative. "Seek the things that are above" (verse 1), so the Christian community must live out our new "risen" status in practical terms.

John 20: 1-18. This is my favourite of the various different accounts of that first Easter morning because of its intensely personal nature. Mary Magdalene sees Jesus in the dark of the garden and doesn't recognise him. I have always found it significant that recognition came when Jesus addresses her by name. Then she calls him teacher. When he stresses that he is yet to return to the Father she refers to him as Lord. We are not ever in this world going to discover exactly what happened. But the main point is that Christians believed something stupendous had happened. They believed that God had vindicated Jesus. The disciples were transformed, and the church was born. Can we share in their gladness and trust, and let the risen Christ transform our lives?

Thought for the Day

It has been a tough journey for a working class, socially conservative, liturgical traditionalist in the modern Church of England – one which in the end, I thought it was the right thing to do, was to part company amicably. For those of us of a certain age, with the means to do so, retirement provides the least controversial exit strategy. But I really don't want to dwell on all my differences with the Church of England nationally. Whatever they say or get up to, the parish system on the ground, is where people like me could soldier on relatively unhindered and a parish is made up of PEOPLE. It's the people who are most important and it has been a pleasure to serve each and every one of you over 26 years since I entered the hallowed walls of the monastery in Mirfield in the year 2000. That same year I had led my parish on a pilgrimage to the Holy Land as a "gift" before parting company with them, so it was a momentous year. As a young(ish) evangelical in a proud Catholic institution, it was an odd fit, but one I came to inhabit comfortably because I knew I was on the right path for me. That path continues of course. I self-identified (how modern!) as a "Catholic Anglican" (not an "Anglo-Catholic" which I always found a bit precious and addicted to lace and Berettas) My natural curiosity and fascination with other world faiths has enhanced my journey and provided me with a much larger worldview and enabled me to see and understand much more clearly my own religion. And I use that word religion advisedly. I am religious in the proper meaning of that word – which comes from the Latin to re-connect – to join the dots – and see how this world really is, and how interconnected it is with God at our very centre. God is both transcendent and within us and religion is about finding and communing with him and manifesting his will in our lives and we do that through Jesus Christ.

The Prayer for Today is my personal prayer practice that I say whenever I pray. It starts with one of the greatest prayers of the Western church which identifies Mary without whom the incarnation doesn't happen, then a great prayer from the Eastern church (the left lung of world Christianity) and ends with the Lord's prayer which unites all Christians from whichever tradition you come.

**Hail Mary, full of Grace
The Lord is with thee
Blessed art thou amongst women
And blessed is the fruit of thy womb Jesus.
Holy Mary, mother of God
Pray for us sinners
Now and at the hour of our death.**

**Lord Jesus Christ, Son of the living God
Have mercy on me a sinner.**

**Our Father which art in heaven
Hallowed be thy name
Thy kingdom come
Thy will be done
On earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread
And forgive us our trespasses
As we forgive those who trespass against us
For thine in the kingdom.
The power and the glory
For ever and ever.
Amen.**

Love and peace,
Martin